

pride, that he was no longer able to take an interest in individuals—only in causes. Mr. Sumner would have lasted longer and better if he could have contrived to express his interest in causes and ideas through the medium of individualities. This is what Mr. Strachey does; and, in view of the present "set" of the public mouth, he is likely to last a long time. As the world goes more and more democratic, the interest in personality mounts; biography gets the inside track, and cold, historical abstractions are left far behind. Literature, opera, moving pictures proceed increasingly on a biographical basis: the "star system," which demands more and more that every pyramid have its peak, rules the day.

Mr. Strachey has his star, of course; he is an astronomer after the heart of Plutarch and Carlyle. He also has his sub-stars, so to speak, and a good, compact, little supporting company. His preliminary "lead" is Lord Melbourne—the "Lord M." who served as constant guide and frequent refuge for the girl-queen: Lord M., who, towards the close of a bizarre and somewhat uncomfortable life, found a revival of interest and a modicum of glory as the gallantly paternal mentor of his new sovereign. It was a unique renaissance: Lord M. was an "autumn rose" indeed. He fills the garden until Albert arrives.

Albert is the real hero of Mr. Strachey's book, and its chief triumph in portraiture. Albert is a sitter worthy the author's best, and he gets it; Victoria herself is perhaps almost too "easy." But Albert, complicated, misunderstood, handicapped through the prejudices of the British governing class, Albert the transmogrifying outsider, rises (despite our author's various satirical digs), not only to the position of "hero" but almost to the plane of heroism. His first marked triumph was over the palace bureaucracy, in the name of economy and efficiency. He simplified and consolidated domestic administration under a Master of the Household, and no longer were the insides of the palace windows cleaned by the Department of the Lord Chamberlain, while the Office of Woods and Forests cleaned their outsides. Later on, Albert even fought to a draw with the redoubtable Palmerston. Albert was still under disapproval as a recent arrival; some who thought that he had begun as an operatic "tenor" now inclined to think that he was ending as a "butler"; while Palmerston's real strength lay in the fact that, for better or worse, he was so indigenously, ineradicably, responsively "English." He was a daring sailor who delighted in the roughness and dangers of the sea; or, differently, he was a spirited, self-willed horse, always being pulled back by the Crown for headstrong indiscretions, always quieting down (for a moment) to a discreeter gait, and then taking the bit between his teeth again and bolting away as hard as ever. Put out of one government berth, he got back into another; yet Albert held his own in a good fight. If he had not died at forty-two, who knows what, with increasing experience and with increased acceptability on the part of the country, he might not have done against Gladstone and Disraeli? The power of the Crown increased from 1840 to 1861, the date of Albert's death, and it steadily declined from 1861 to 1901, the date of the death of Victoria herself. It is equally true that by the time the 'nineties were reached the nation's idol was a "very incomplete representative of the nation"—a circumstance hardly noticed yet "conspicuously true." As the Queen's power declined (under a succession of great Ministers) her prestige grew enormously;

time, age and use doubtless tended to produce a fact which rendered the other fact less apparent.

Albert made himself—or was close to making himself—the real ruler of England, and for a while seemed to be turning back the whole drift of British politics. Here Mr. Strachey is full, exact, even profound, however seemingly casual, skittish and frivolous. In fact he has achieved a study in humanized history (constitutional history at that), which quite shames and eclipses many of the efforts of modern scientific historians.

Naïve, prosaic natures are sometimes peculiarly accessible to the charlatan. The younger Victoria was captivated by Napoleon III, and the older Victoria, in her widowhood, was an easy prey to Disraeli: one wonders if an elderly Albert, with a fund of ripened knowledge and a character finally become British, would not have stood here as a safeguard, a protector. Disraeli was once described as a man without one of the instincts of a gentleman; and his open expression that, in dealing with the Queen, it was necessary to lay the flattery on with a trowel, gives some colour to that bit of startling criticism. Poor Queen! For, as Mr. Strachey himself says: "Like a dram-drinker whose ordinary life is passed in dull sobriety, her unsophisticated intelligence gulped down his ro-coco allurements with peculiar zest." Sometimes Mr. Strachey is not noticeably preferable to Lord Beaconsfield.

Well, this sharp-edged tartness is one of the essentials of our author's make-up, and one important element in his appeal. The appeal is there throughout, and it will continue so long as people care to have other people commented upon, whether favourably or unfavourably. Mr. Strachey has the advantage of dealing with real people, instead of with characters laboriously abstracted from life in general, and his book is more fascinating and compelling than most novels. Structural art is present, as well as direct, immediate human interest; also such allure as can exist without mellowness and sweetness of tone. A Strachey may be welcome as he chastises the flaws and shortcomings of a preceding age; the age always immediately preceding one's own is certain to deserve chastisement most richly. But will a Strachey for another age and another society be equally relished and appreciated? Yes, perhaps. Perhaps even more so!

HENRY B. FULLER.

IN THE BEGINNING.

To the general reader Mr. Hartland is less well known as a popularizer of anthropological data than the more voluminous Sir James Frazer, but essentially he represents the same school of thought. His latest product, "Primitive Society; the Beginnings of the Family and the Reckoning of Descent," is a re-elaboration of a shorter treatise published some years ago for professional consumption. There is some attempt to do justice to the descriptive literature of recent years, but the spirit that pervades the book is the spirit of 1880: the whole work is a dogmatic assertion of one cardinal doctrine of the antiquated evolutionary sociology of that generation—the uniform priority of matrilineal as compared with patrilineal descent. Little attention is paid to recent criticisms which have pointed out that the borrowing of social usage is a reality and must play havoc with any preordained scheme of evolution. Nor is Mr. Hartland troubled by the fact that many of the rudest communities stress neither side of the family or show a decided preference for the paternal side, that in North America

¹"Primitive Society; the Beginnings of the Family and the Reckoning of Descent." Edwin Sidney Hartland. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company.

most of the agricultural populations are matrilineal while the lowliest hunters do not reckon descent unilaterally at all. All that Mr. Hartland does is to show that a priori the phenomena can be plausibly ranged in the sequence he defends: he quite fails to prove that this logical arrangement corresponds to historical fact.

A much sounder and more stimulating, though likewise one-sided view of primitive life is offered by Father Koppers,¹ a spokesman of the Austrian Catholic school founded by his master, Father Wilhelm Schmidt, a scholar of remarkable erudition and insight. Unfortunately Schmidt and Koppers in breaking away from the thralldom of the earlier evolutionary philosophy of society follow the leadership of Gräbner. Gräbner's vehement protest against the doctrines of the "classical" anthropologists was doubtless justified, but his constructive work culminates in supplanting one artificial scheme with another. As amended by Schmidt and Koppers, his theory involves the assumption of a series of mutually independent cultural spheres which have evolved from the primeval culture now best represented by the pygmies. For example, Father Schmidt does not, like Mr. Hartland, derive father right from mother right, nor does he reverse the order, but rather conceives of both rules of descent as arising in mutual independence out of a condition in which either parental side was stressed to the disadvantage of the other. On this particular point the Austrian school is probably essentially right, but there is a rigidity about their culture-spheres that hardly fits them for the purpose of adequately representing the everlasting and capricious flux of cultural happenings. By a skilful juggling of these atom-like figments it is indeed possible to give a unified account of how all the socially transmitted heritage of mankind developed, but no more than the old-fashioned evolutionists do these latter-day antagonists of theirs furnish proof for their associations and sequences.

Another serious defect of the theory popularized by Koppers lies in the tacit assumption that the independent development of cultural features in distinct areas is an impossibility. If tribes in British Columbia share a two-class organization with Melanesian peoples, such a division is supposed to have spread to both regions from a single centre of origin, together with associated cultural features. While this mode of regarding the facts certainly simplifies an account of their history, it involves an unwarrantedly low estimate of human inventiveness and ignores the contention of the American school that the same cultural result may be arrived at from distinct starting-points through distinct processes, and that what is assumed as "the same" may really be distinct, being classed together merely because of our ignorance.

Despite these reservations, Father Koppers's essay commands respect because it envisages the totality of human civilization from a unified point of view and tends to stimulate investigators to bolder synthetic work than has yet been attempted by those who adhere to a piecemeal reconstruction of the history of culture. Moreover, the present treatise purports to deal with the *beginnings* of organization, which in the language of the Austrian school means the society of the pygmies, and in this special field Father Schmidt is well versed and has established conclusions quite in consonance with modern critical ethnology. Thus, when Father Koppers defends the theory of individual property under archaic conditions, the evidence entirely supports his contentions. Similarly, the existence of a political unit (*Urstaat*), even at a very low level, can not be any longer denied. On the other hand, when dealing with more complex conditions, the author is led astray by the plausibilities of the Gräbner-Schmidt scheme. For example, he commits the fatal error of confounding matrilineal with matriarchal customs, and goes so far as to assert that in matrilineal societies males are deemed too insignificant for a tribal

initiation rite, which is said to be administered solely for the female sex. It would be interesting to have Father Koppers produce the ethnographic evidence for this strange generalization. Most ethnologists now recognize that maternal descent has no necessary relation to an extravagant feminism and that, as a matter of fact, really or approximately, matriarchal societies can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

To confine one's attention, however, to the purely ethnological aspect of Father Koppers's book would be to miss its most essential quality from the author's point of view, for as a true member of the Church Militant he uses ethnology as a weapon against her enemies and on behalf of Catholic Christianity. On the one hand, he tries to sap the foundations of orthodox socialistic philosophy by showing how antiquated are the ethnological principles still accepted as valid by most faithful Marxists. That is to say, he vigorously attacks the system of Lewis H. Morgan, which, through the labours of Engels and Bebel, became an integral part of the socialistic creed in Germany. There can be no doubt that Father Koppers's criticism is well substantiated, but he fails to do justice to the solid contributions due to Morgan's indefatigable industry. On the other hand, Father Koppers contrasts the advantages of material and spiritual culture and arrives at the conclusion that a combination of both is possible only by a re-Christianization of the Western World. Whatever one may think of the proposed remedy much of the argument he advances against modern civilization can be unhesitatingly accepted by an impartial observer.

Altogether, such writers as Father Koppers must be regarded as among the greatest benefactors of a true liberalism. Themselves rigidly conservative, they have an uncanny ability for ferreting out the hidden dogmatism of soi-disant advanced thought and by laying bare its inadequacies lead to its periodical overthrow. Whatever may be true of the arena of public life, in the realm of the intellect orthodoxy can be conquered not by supplanting one form by another; but only by the abandonment of all orthodoxy.

ROBERT H. LOWIE.

THE ACCENT OF GREATNESS.

ALONE of its kind, Professor Oliver Elton's "Survey of English Literature, 1780-1880," now completed in four volumes, possesses the accent of greatness. Beside this masterly and ordered review such attempts as the last volumes of the "Cambridge History of English Literature" are seen to be the chaos that they are, while the puerile surveys of our native order of architecture deserve, alas! only the Gargantuan wrath of Mr. Mencken. They still rear giants in the British universities: Saintsbury, who knows more books and writes worse English than anybody else alive; Hugh Walker, whose "Literature of the Victorian Era" is the only study to be compared with Mr. Elton's; A. C. Bradley, Sir A. W. Ward, and one or two others. Mr. Elton is of their race. Apparently he has read everything from *Æschylus* to the last report of the American Federation of Labour. He has read Martin Tupper; he has read Stubbs's "Constitutional History"; he has read Ferrier's "Institutes of Metaphysic" (Ferrier "beats his way to the absolute upon a drum"! He has even read the poems of Mrs. Browning and the novels of Ouida. And yet he tells the truth when he writes, "I have tried to be on guard against the treacherous glow that is felt by the mere excavator, and to admit nothing that has failed to give me pleasure or entertainment, or to inspire a living interest, or at any rate an active distaste." Through this forest of literature he pursues his critical way, eloquent against "the army of inquirers, soundly trained in modern method, and with their conscience well steeled against mere literature," such as the Dante scholar, "weighted by his load, or hump, of learning; always sane himself, always fresh and candid, fre-

¹"Die Anfänge des menschlichen Gemeinschaftslebens im Spiegel der neueren Völkerkunde." Wilhelm Koppers. Volksvereins-Verlag, Gladbach, 1921.

²"A Survey of English Literature, 1780-1880." 4 vols. Oliver Elton. New York: The Macmillan Company.